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Resolve to Serve

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And you think the baggage fees when you fly are bad? Thirty-five University of Dayton students will each carry 50-pound suitcases full of medical supplies, in addition to their regular luggage, to Panama Jan. 5 to deliver to clinics and pharmacies.

The students, sponsored by the University's Office of Pre-Medical Programs and Campus Ministry, also will shadow doctors in clinics, assisting with basic functions, and conduct health workshops on preventative healthcare.

Miami Valley Hospital, doctors Tom and Marylynn Herchline, and local organizations, businesses, churches and medical practices donated medical supplies for the six-day trip.

The medical brigade to Panama is one of 10 groups of University of Dayton students starting the new year globetrotting the western hemisphere on Winter BreakOuts in service of others to make the world a better place.

During the week of Jan. 6, students will be in places from Chicago to Ecuador performing a variety of community service projects such as rebuilding neighborhoods and working in homeless shelters and orphanages.

"Our BreakOuts during the spring, fall and semester breaks allow students who want to do more than a day of service — but maybe not a whole semester — an opportunity to immerse themselves in new places and experience life in a new way," said Mary Niebler, Center for Social Concern coordinator of cross-cultural immersions. "We hope students break free of their comfort zones and expand their horizons. Students say there's nothing quite like them. Everyone comes away with a sense of humility and accomplishment."

Here is a summary of the University of Dayton Winter BreakOut trips:

Tijuana, Mexico: Students will work with the Tijuana Christian Mission, which began more than 40 years ago when Martha Lopez started taking children into her home who had no food, few clothes and no education. She fed them hot meals, clothed them and enrolled them in school. Today, more than 80 children live at the Tijuana Christian Mission. The Dayton students will do work the mission can't afford to do on its own.

Belize: Students will be working in an orphanage just outside Belize City. The group will help with general upkeep and rehab of the orphanage building, mainly painting and gardening. They also will work with the children on homework and other activities.

Ecuador: Students will work with the Marianists to learn about Ecuador's history, culture, climate, government and topography while volunteering with the local community. Students will examine the struggles of maintaining a viable rainforest environment for the planet and its inhabitants.

El Salvador: Students will work with CRISPAZ (Christians for Peace in El Salvador) and experience Salvadorans' daily lives and hear stories of El Salvador's economic, spiritual and political history.

Chicago: Students will work with Amate House volunteers to help with homeless shelters, food pantries, schools and churches in the neighborhoods where Amate House volunteers live in community.

New Orleans: Students will do hands-on service, continuing the rebuilding process in New Orleans' neighborhoods through Project Homecoming. They also will have opportunities to learn more about the political, environmental, ethnic and class dimensions of the suffering brought on by Hurricane Katrina.

Bloomington, Ind.: Students will work at the Solsberry Hill Retreat Center that serves local non-profit agencies that respond to the injustices of substandard housing, inadequate senior care, underprivileged children, homeless care and inequity of food distribution.

East St. Louis, Ill.: This immersion, in conjunction with the Hubbard House, Catholic Urban Programs and Marianist brothers,

will have students working in a day care, soup kitchen and homeless shelter.

For more information, contact Shawn Robinson, associate director of media relations, at 937-229-3391 or srobinson@udayton.edu.